

2020-2021 School Year Reopening Questions and Answers Relating to COVID-19

Q. What learning format will be utilized for the start of school?

A. The district plans for all students to attend school in person when school starts on August 17, with our regular attendance policies in place.

Q. Will there be an alternative digital learning option available if I do not want my child to attend?

A. Not unless your child is determined to need a different educational placement by law, such as a determination made by an IEP or 504 team, or they are under a directed medical quarantine. In those circumstances, alternative arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis with the involvement of parents and the student.

Q. Will my child be counted absent if s/he is under a quarantine directed by a medical provider?

A. The school must be in receipt of a quarantine order or directive by a medical provider or authorized health official. Absences due to a quarantine order shall not be counted toward your child's chronic absenteeism limit if that documentation is provided.

Q. Will secondary students be required to wear masks?

A. Yes. Grades 6-12 shall wear masks or other approved face coverings in school vehicles, during class, during passing periods, in lunch lines, and during any other times that social distancing is not possible. Some discretion will be given to your child's principal and teachers based on unique circumstances that may arise. The only other exceptions will be those required by law.

Q. Will pre-school and elementary students be required to wear masks?

A. Yes. Grades preK-5 shall be required to wear a mask or face shield in school vehicles, in hallways, to the extent possible during class, and at other times that social distancing or group isolation is not possible. Some discretion will be given to your child's principal and teachers based on unique circumstances that may arise. Students shall be isolated to their classroom groups during the day to minimize interaction with students in other classrooms.

Q. Under what circumstances will students be exempted from wearing masks?

A. Exceptions may be made only as required by law, such as based upon the decisions of a student's IEP or 504 teams.

Q. What if my child does not qualify for an exemption and I don't want them to wear a mask?

A. Wearing masks is a rule adopted by the school board, similar to any other health and safety or dress code rules adopted by the board. Students who refuse to wear masks will face consequences consistent with the district's student discipline policies.

Q. Will a mask be provided by the school or can I select one for my child to wear?

A. Parents may provide a mask for their children, but the district will have them available. The masks must either be cloth, a multi-layered disposable mask, or other approved face covering.

Q. What does “isolation by classroom groups” mean for elementary students?

A. Elementary students may be required to eat lunch, play, and have specials exclusively with students from their classroom.

Q. Will staff be required to wear masks?

A. Staff will be required to wear masks or other approved face coverings when not teaching, and to the extent possible when teaching. Wearing a face shield instead of a mask or not wearing any face covering may be necessary at times.

Q. What other steps is the district taking to make attending school safe?

A. Frequent hand-washing will be enforced in all buildings. The district will also increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting buildings. Visitors will be required to wear masks and parents will need to schedule appointments to meet with school staff.

Q. Will parents be notified if there is a case of COVID-19 in my child’s school or classroom?

A. Not from the school, unless required by law and permitted by confidentiality laws. If contact tracing is determined to be necessary by our public health department, it will contact you.

Q. Will schools close and move to digital learning if one or more cases of COVID-19 is discovered among school students or staff?

A. Every effort will be made to keep schools open. One or more cases will not trigger an automatic closing of schools. The decision to close will be based on a number of factors and include consultation with our public health department and local medical providers.

Q. Will the district’s after-school programs still be available?

A. The middle school and elementary programs will be offered but may not start at the beginning of the year. The district will communicate once plans are finalized.

Q. What can I do as a parent to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 at school?

A. It is very important that you monitor your children’s health and keep them home when they don’t feel well, even if illness has not been confirmed by a medical provider. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, muscle aches, breathing difficulty, coughing, and diarrhea in children, though symptoms can vary widely and some children exhibit few, if any, symptoms.

Note: Plans may change as new guidance becomes available from the Nebraska Department of Education, the CDC, or state or local public health agencies.